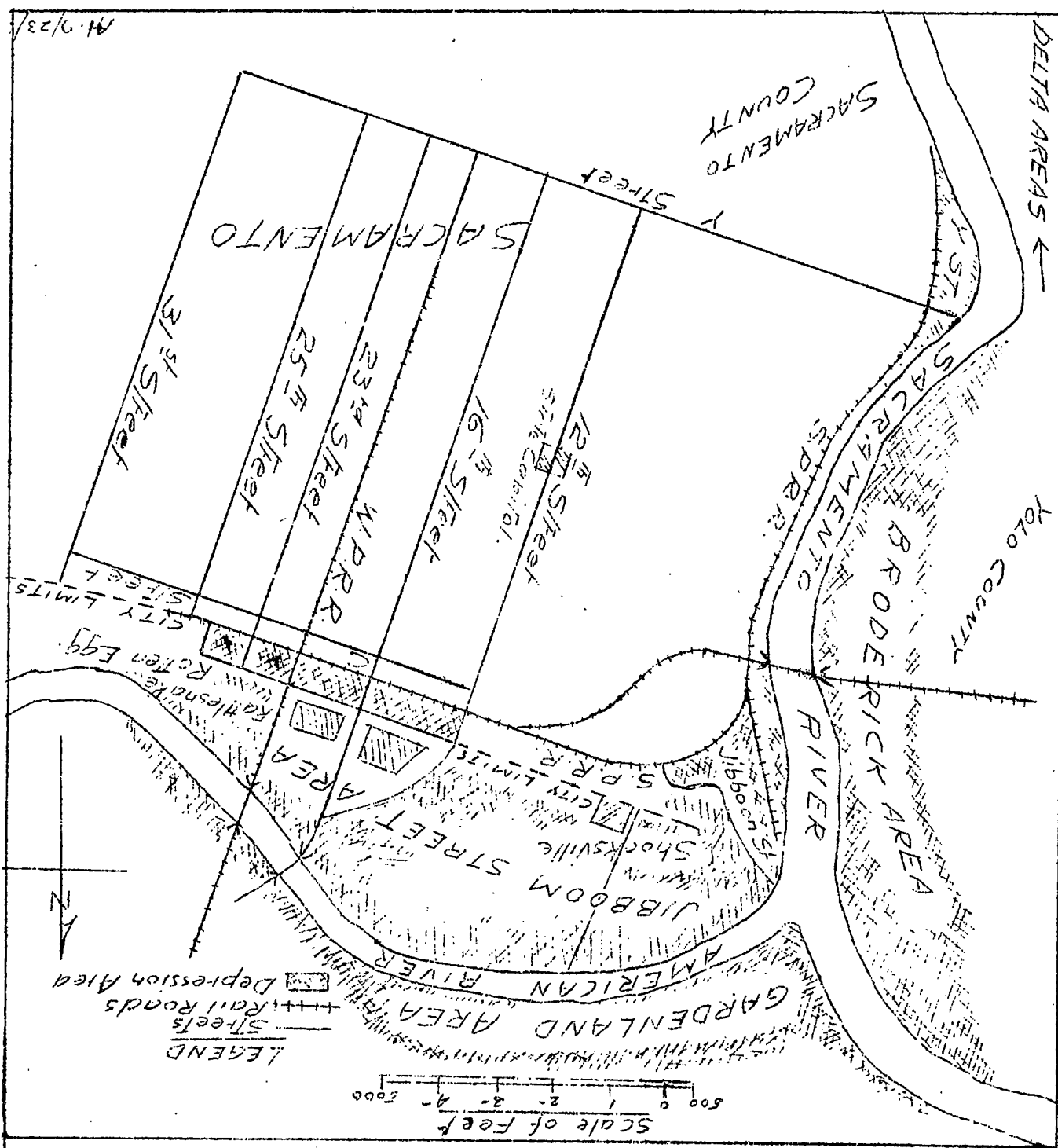


# LOCATION OF DEPRESSION SETTLEMENT AREAS VICINITY OF SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA (SUMMER 1935)



M-9/23

February, 1938

PUBLIC STATEMENT REGARDING TRANSIENT RELIEF

by California State Relief Commission

Periodically California's unemployment and relief difficulties are laid to migrations to this State of what are described as hordes of indigent and near-indigent families from other states. Quite as frequently there is agitation concerning alleviation of what is described as the appalling conditions among these migrants.

It is well for us to stop and consider some indisputable facts, or California is liable to be forced into an impossible position with respect to support for indigents of other states.

The counties of California operate under a law which provides that indigents who are unemployable and need permanent care must have lived in California for three years without outside assistance before they gain residence. In giving unemployment relief to those in need because of unemployment the California State Relief Administration requires only twelve months in the State. The counties give temporary care only to non-residents and return them to the states from which they came. The California Relief Administration gives temporary care only to needy workers who have been here less than a year until residence in another state has been verified and then offers to return these families to their own states and stop relief whether they go or not.

California has high relief standards which are in keeping with the living standards of this State. Some states have no unemployment relief and in others it is as low as from \$5.00 to \$10.00 per month per family. Agricultural wages in California are from two to four times as high as in most of the agricultural states of the nation. The lowest WPA wage paid in California is \$55.00 per month in the cities and \$40.00 per month in rural areas while in a number of other states it is as low as \$19.00 per month.

These conditions do encourage many families to leave other states and come to California in the hope of better employment or public help. If California tries to support all of the families who can't get along in other states and for whom there is no public care we will build up an indigent population which is out of all proportion to the population of California. The cost to the people of California would be impossible to carry. Relief is only a part of the cost. Medical care must be provided and hospitals must be built as most of the county hospitals are now overcrowded. Schools are overcrowded and more must be provided. Public health and policing costs are increased. These things are the inevitable costly results of keeping in California the indigent and near-indigent populations of other states who have come here and don't want to go home.

The direct costs are serious enough but eventually California labor must pay a tremendous price. If we accept these people and give them relief

Public Statement Regarding Transient Relief  
Page 2.

whenever they need it the surplus of workers which we build up will so oversupply the labor needs that standards for which labor organizations are always striving cannot be maintained and will be broken down.

California does give good care to its citizens and gives the same care to non-residents until they can be sent back to the states responsible for them. California cannot pay the tax bill for the states which do not provide money to take care of their own citizens. California cannot accept with open arms the indigents and near-indigents of other states and have living standards dragged down toward the lowest prevailing in the United States, or go broke trying to maintain present decent standards from public funds.

It is often said that the whole transient problem is a responsibility of the Federal Government. No one state can meet the situation and at the same time protect itself from the difficulties described. Up to now the Federal Government has not done more than give a little relief temporarily from time to time. The effects are just as bad as if the State had done it.

The transient problem can be met only by the Federal Government assuming the responsibility of establishing a program which goes beyond temporary aid. Relief to a transient until he is no longer a transient is no plan at all. If the Federal Government is to assist it must answer the question as to what is to happen to the transient after he has received temporary relief.

At present the Federal Farm Security Administration has a limited appropriation which will be used for medical care and hospitalization and emergency relief grants to transient agricultural families needing relief and who do not want to go back to the states where they are residents. When this money is spent the situation will be just that much more acute than it is now. California cannot consider this program satisfactory. The Farm Security Administration people are doing their best to meet an immediate need of a permanent situation, but if the Farm Security Administration or any other Federal agency is to give transient relief the program must also provide for settling these people in some form of self-support either here or elsewhere or for reestablishing them in the states from which they came. This requires action by Congress.

PUBLIC STATEMENT REGARDING TRANSIENT RELIEF

By SRA

4/11/38

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